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# HANDBOOK

OF

PRINCIPLES and PRACTICE

OF THE

WORLD MISSION PRAYER LEAGUE

WORLD MISSION PRAYER LEAGUE  
628 ANDRUS BUILDING  
MINNEAPOLIS 2, MINNESOTA



*Adopted Nov. 4, 1949*  
*Printed in 1950*

# HANDBOOK OF PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE OF THE WORLD MISSION PRAYER LEAGUE

## I. ORIGIN AND PURPOSE

(1) The vision and work of the World Mission Prayer League began in 1932 with a small group of students at the Lutheran Bible Institute in Minneapolis, who were challenged to pray for the evangelization of South America. The challenge came to them as a heart burden from the Spirit of God. It found expression in the commanding words of Christ from Luke 10:2, "The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the laborers are few; pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest that He send forth laborers into His harvest."

(2) This vision and prayer took firm root and developed into widespread action. Missionaries from the group set out to find ways of bringing the Gospel to the unevangelized tribes and peoples of South America. The fire of this praying group was contagious, and many others were soon enlisted to join the prayer fellowship. In 1937 a mission was organized along simple lines to minister to its pioneer missionaries, Rev. Ernest R. Weinhardt and Mr. John Carlsen, who left the following year for Bolivia. The Mission was at first called the "South American Mission Prayer League." Later, in 1940, the name was changed to the WORLD MISSION PRAYER LEAGUE, because the prayer burden had grown to include all the world. A beginning of work was next made in Central Asia. Since then the number of missionaries has rapidly increased, and the growth of the Mission has necessitated a larger organization with a more carefully defined body of principles and practice to insure harmonious fellowship and fruitful service.

(3) The purpose of the World Mission Prayer League is to complement and supplement the regular missionary program of the Lutheran church bodies by making available to qualified lay members, as well as to pastors and

professionally trained men and women, the opportunity to go and preach the Gospel and labor for its successful propagation among the unevangelized peoples of the earth. There is no intention to compete with the official missions of the Church, or to divert men or means from their work or program. But because of the vast areas in the world with their overflowing millions still untouched by the extensive missionary work in progress today, and the great scarcity of laborers to go into the fields white for the harvest, the World Mission Prayer League believes itself to be in harmony with Christ's will for itself as a part of His Church when it prays fervently that laborers be sent forth, and when it serves as a mission agency through which they may go to the field. Such laborers who seek to serve through this Mission must have heard the call of the Lord of the harvest, and must willingly volunteer to go. They must be willing to trust God for the supply of all needs, be ready to abide by the principles which regulate the operating fellowship of the World Mission Prayer League, and be approved by the Mission.

## **II. STATEMENT OF FAITH**

(4) The World Mission Prayer League accepts and acknowledges the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired and inerrant Word of God and as the only sufficient and infallible rule of faith and practice. It also accepts the Apostolic, the Nicene, and the Athanasian Creeds, the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, Luther's Small Catechism, and the other symbolical books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as brief but true expositions of the Word of God.

## **III. MEMBERSHIP**

(5) The membership of the World Mission Prayer League shall consist of such persons who are members in good standing in the Lutheran Church, who have shown definite prayer interest in the work of the World Mission Prayer League, and whose membership has been approved.

(6) The World Mission Prayer League is pledged to pray for laborers and to intercede in general for God's missionary program. As the name of the Mission suggests, its watchword is prayer. Its chief implement and its principal working method is prayer. Therefore it is the desire of the Mission to secure for its work the power and blessing of definite, frequent, sustained, and united prayer. Those who desire to be intercessors in behalf of the Mission and who ask to be enrolled as such, constitute the membership of the Mission. A Prayer League membership card is sent to anyone requesting it. Everyone thus enrolled as an intercessor will receive a monthly circular giving recent information and special subjects for prayer and praise.

#### **IV. PUBLICATIONS**

(7) The official organ of the World Mission Prayer League is the monthly magazine, **WORLD VISION**. This has a regular subscription price and is sent to anyone who subscribes. From time to time the Prayer League also publishes other literature in the interest of the Mission and of the missionary cause in general. Some of this literature is distributed without cost, and some is sold at a stated price. Free sample copies of **WORLD VISION** and other literature may be obtained upon request for careful distribution.

#### **V. ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION**

(8) The World Mission Prayer League meets once a year in annual convention to hear reports of the work from the missionaries and workers, to elect officers, to attend to such matters as may require its attention, and to strengthen its bonds of fellowship by united prayer and open discussion concerning the work. The World Mission Prayer League does not operate on a budgetary basis and therefore the annual convention does not concern itself with adopting a budget, nor does it underwrite or guarantee in any way the financial requirements of the missionaries and the work. While this is the under-

standing between the Mission and its workers, the Home Council is authorized to make the customary guarantees for maintenance and repatriation to foreign governments in behalf of its missionaries, and will fulfill such obligations should occasion arise. Similarly the World Mission Prayer League does not assume the responsibility to decide or determine at the annual convention the affairs of the missionaries in the field. It is organized to conduct the work in the following manner:

### *A. At Home*

(9) The conduct of the affairs of the World Mission Prayer League is vested in a BOARD OF TRUSTEES (hereinafter designated as the HOME COUNCIL) of fifteen persons (seven pastors and eight lay persons) elected by the general convention of the Prayer League. The Home Council meets quarterly to confer and to counsel with the Directorate concerning the general program and conduct of the work, and to attend to such business as may be its responsibility.

(10) The GENERAL DIRECTOR is appointed for a period of three years by the Home Council, after consultation with the Field Conferences. He must be a man who shares the life of faith with all the missionaries of the Mission. In a peculiar way he represents the missionaries in the affairs of the Mission in the homeland, and hence should serve, as far as possible, with their hearty agreement. He is responsible for directing and carrying out the aims and decisions of the Mission, and in this he is assisted and sustained by the Directorate Committee of the Home Council.

(11) The actual management and direction of the work is the responsibility of the DIRECTORATE, which is composed of the General Director and a committee of three Council members elected by the Home Council, one of whom should be the Treasurer. These must be able to meet very frequently. The Chairman of the Home Council (President) is an ex-officio member of the Directorate. The Directorate is augmented by two addi-



tional members of the Home Council, both pastors, for the handling of all personnel matters before they are brought before the regular meetings of the Home Council. Some of the duties of the Directorate are to disburse the funds of the Mission, to supervise the Mission homes, and to arrange for Mission publications. In addition, it arranges for deputation work, takes care of the affairs of missionaries on furlough or in retirement, and directs all the home affairs of the Mission in accordance with the Handbook of the Mission. The Directorate shall always act in unanimous agreement, and in complete harmony with the Home Council. All major matters, such as the acceptance of candidates, appointment of home staff, etc., shall be referred to the Home Council for consideration.

(12) The HOME STAFF carries out the work at the home base. It consists of all home workers of the Mission working in the homes, offices, or on the field. Home Staff workers are appointed by the Council, unless such action should be otherwise delegated, and are responsible to the Directorate for the conduct of their work.

(13) The Home Council shall ask certain pastors or laymen to serve as MISSION REPRESENTATIVES. They shall represent the interests of the Mission in their respective areas and shall serve for a period of two years. Their functions shall be defined and their activities guided by the Home Directorate.

### ***B. Abroad***

(14) The missionaries on each field constitute the FIELD CONFERENCE. Each Field Conference meets once a year, when all the missionaries are required to be present, unless excused by the Directorate. At these meetings the general business matters of the Field Conference are cared for, such as the election of officers, the appointment of workers, the opening of new stations, questions of cooperation with other missions, employment of national workers, recommendations to the Home Council, and all like matters. Much time is taken for

united prayer and fellowship and for open discussion concerning the spiritual state of the work. Above all, it is imperative that at each Field Conference meeting the missionaries consider thoroughly the strategy and plan of the work, that they become united in their vision and faith, and that with one accord they give themselves to attain the objectives and accomplish the work which they have agreed upon. Such agreement in purpose and unity in effort are essential and indispensable to successful and fruitful missionary service.

(15) As at home, the actual management and direction of the work on each field is the responsibility of a DIRECTORATE, composed of the Field Director and a Field Executive Committee (Vice Director, Secretary, Treasurer,) all of whom are elected by the Field Conference, according to its own approved procedure. The Directorate is responsible to see that the work is conducted in harmony with the Handbook of the Mission and the resolutions of the Conference. It shall keep in cooperative touch with the Home Base in regard to the work on the field, through regular reports and minutes of meetings. The Field Committee shall sustain and support the Field Director as he endeavors to remove misunderstandings between workers, serves as representative of the Mission in matters relating to the government or other missions, makes decisions in matters where he cannot obtain counsel of the Field Committee, and in general supervises the work on the field. Other duties or regulations affecting the Directorate on the field shall be designated by the Field Conference.

### ***C. General Relations Between Home Base and Field Conferences***

(16) The Bible frequently uses the figure of warfare to illustrate God's program for the evangelization of the world. In this spiritual conflict the front-trench soldier and his praying and giving partners at home must stand and fight together. The importance of a close relationship between the two has been foundational to the vision and work of the World Mission Prayer League. It is sug-



gested even in the name: WORLD MISSION—the front trench; PRAYER LEAGUE—the home constituency. The foreign front is but the extension of the home front. A missionary movement which wins victories abroad has usually been the irrepressible outworking of spiritual life and love at home. We tend to reproduce abroad what we are at home.

(17) In keeping with this truth, the World Mission Prayer League has sought to link together these two aspects of successful warfare in the body of its fellowship. The Mission consists not only of full-time workers, but also of subscribers and praying friends. In organizing the affairs of the Mission, the aim has been to give to each its rightful place, and to achieve a harmonious functioning which shall insure a maximum degree of usefulness to each.

(18) Each Field Conference shall be free to press on in the carrying out of its vision and to work with all liberty, but in all major undertakings it shall do this in conscientious fellowship and agreement with the Home Base. The Home Base, likewise, shall press forward freely in the carrying out of the vision and work of the Mission at home, but in the same spirit of conscientious fellowship and agreement with the fields. Mutual faith is the foundation for this relationship between fields and Home Base. Those at home must trust the workers on each field to manage wisely and well the affairs of their particular field; while the missionaries on the field must trust the friends at home to hold fast to their vision, to be steadfast in prayer, to distribute all funds faithfully, and to exercise care in the selection of missionary candidates. All are bound together by their loyalty to a common vision and commission, as well as to the principles and practice of the Mission as outlined in this Handbook.

(19) Perhaps the most important part of the organization both at home and on the field, and doubtless the most difficult to define, is the Directorate. The regulation of all action in the Mission hinges on the functioning of this body. The Director must be free to act, to lead,

and to direct, but the Committee which assists him must be free to affirm, deny, suggest, refuse, and finally determine in all matters. They check each other. They complement each other like the two oars of a boat. They must pull together. The terms of their relationship and the balance of their authority cannot be explicitly stated, for it is a spiritual relationship in which they "in honor prefer one another" and together wait upon the Lord to hear His voice and then follow Him. They withhold decisions until they are in agreement.

(20) In certain specific cases the Home Council shall take a hand in the affairs of the fields. In the case of new fields, for instance, the Council shall direct matters until the missionaries who are entrusted with the opening of the work are considered capable of handling their own affairs. Similarly, whenever a field lacks competent leadership, the Council shall take over matters for a time. Or a grave crisis in leadership, or possibly some serious violation of the principles and practice of the Mission may make it necessary for the Council to assume charge. In any such case the Home Council shall act only in sympathetic consultation with the field concerned, and shall continue to direct matters only until the crisis is passed and the conduct of affairs can again be restored to the field. At all times the Home Council shall share with the fields in decisions concerning major financial commitments, such as purchase of property.

## **VI. FINANCES**

### ***A. Guiding Principles***

(21) The METHOD FOR OBTAINING FUNDS or goods for the temporal needs of the Mission is primarily prayer to God and trust in Him to provide. Information concerning the needs of the Mission is disseminated to the members of the Prayer League who have pledged themselves to intercede for the work, and also to others who make particular inquiry, while the general work of the Mission is presented to friends at large through the regular publications of the Mission, and in other ways, as opportunity is offered. No direct solicitation of

X funds is made. The Mission is not so constituted or constructed as to have any grounds or desire for appealing either to its own constituency or to the Church as such for help in maintaining its work. It has no other wish than to encourage and strengthen every missionary effort of the Church, and in no way desires to divert any support whatever from the regularly organized work of the Church bodies. It does, however, gratefully receive and accept those additional voluntary contributions which will be prompted by the Holy Spirit for the work of the Mission, in answer to believing prayer. It firmly believes that the promises of God and His faithfulness are sufficient grounds for obeying His call to missionary service, and for trusting Him to be with His own and supply all their needs. The Mission is committed to avoid any kind of indebtedness.

(22) The FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE WORKERS of the Mission are made on the basis that the Mission does not operate on a budget or calculated income. There is therefore no limit to the number of new workers who may be commissioned and sent to the field. Furthermore, no stated salary is pledged or guaranteed to any workers at home or in the foreign field. All workers in the Mission, whatever their position, are treated impartially. A certain sum is specified as a goal for a monthly allowance to be paid each worker when there are sufficient funds on hand. But if funds are not sufficient for full allowances, the workers receive partial allowances in proportion to the funds on hand. The responsibility of the officers and the members of the Home Council, with respect to the matter of finances, shall be that of good stewards and faithful intercessors, and in no way shall they be held responsible to raise or gather funds for the support of the work. All missionaries and workers of the Mission agree to trust and look to God above all for the supply of their needs.

X (23) IN THE USE OF MONEY AND GOODS we believe that it is God's plan for us to live on a sacrificial scale rather than on an abounding one. Expenditures for

maintenance and equipment are held to a minimum consistent with the requirements of efficient service. The missionaries live and conduct their work in as simple a fashion as is compatible with health and good order. As a prayer and missionary fellowship, and as members of the same body, all shall seek to share and bear one another's burdens in faithful intercession before the Throne of Grace.

(24) WHAT HAPPENS when the Mission operates on this basis? There may often be shortage of funds, a scarcity of material supplies, with few possessions and no reserves. There may also be occasions for extreme sacrifice for the sake of the work and for others in the fellowship of the Mission. At the same time, when living faith acts on the promises of God, there can be unlimited advance within the bounds of God's will for worldwide evangelization. In such a life there will be rich opportunities to learn faith, patience, humility, love, obedience to the Holy Spirit, and utter dependence on God.

(25) Being guided by these principles in financial matters, the Mission steps into new advances as the Lord guides and reveals His will, trusting Him to open doors, to supply the needs of the work, and to give fruit to its labors according to His promises.

### ***B. Rules Governing Receipts and Disbursements of Funds***

(26) THE FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS of the Mission are exact and comprehensive. Each gift is acknowledged by receipt and letter. All expenditures are made by checks signed by the Treasurer and countersigned by a member of the Home Council. Account books are carefully kept. Once a year these are audited by public accountants, following which a financial report is published in the official organ of the Mission, WORLD VISION.

(27) The MISSION TREASURER at the Home Base is responsible for the keeping of the books and for the receipt and disbursement of all Mission funds. At the



end of each month the Treasurer and the other members of the Directorate divide and disburse the funds of the Mission to the work at home and to the various fields, using all funds as they have been designated. The procedure in the disbursement of general Mission funds is first to pay the current maintenance expenses at home and on the fields. The balance is then applied to missionary allowances. If there are further funds available, they are applied to other needs of the work. No undesignated funds are kept on hand. The scale of allowances shall be set by the Directorate in consultation with the Field Conferences and in consideration of varying field needs. Allowances for new workers begin upon their arrival on the field. A full financial report for the month of all funds of the Mission shall accompany the remittances to each field. The Home Base in this way serves as a channel or clearing house through which the Lord's supply may pass. Conscientious care is exercised to receive, acknowledge, record, and transmit each gift to its proper destination.

(28) DONORS ARE ALLOWED TO DESIGNATE THEIR GIFTS for special projects or purposes approved by the Mission. The purpose of such gifts is always carefully regarded and carried out. The Mission would like to encourage gifts to be designated for the General Fund, or for the special support of certain missionaries, since this would make possible a more equitable provision for existing needs. If a gift is intended for any special purpose either at home or abroad, this should be stated very clearly. If no designation is made, it is understood that the gift is intended for the General Fund of the Mission, and it is used accordingly. Each gift is regarded as a provision and trust from God, and if there is any doubt as to the intended use of any gift, the money is held until further correspondence with the donor makes this clear.

(29) EACH FIELD CONFERENCE, as well as the Home Base, regulates its own financial affairs (such as rents, travel, securing of native workers, etc.) and keeps careful records of all its business matters. Each month



the Directorate of each Field sends to the Home Base a report of its financial transactions and status, and advises the Home Base of any special financial needs for which the Field is looking to the Lord.

***C. Gifts to the Mission Are Received and Disbursed as Follows:***

(30) **THE GENERAL FUND.** Gifts for the Mission as a whole, and all undesignated gifts, are put into the General Fund and are distributed as fairly as possible to all branches of the work of the Mission. As far as it will permit, this fund is used to pay general running expenses at home (office, stationery, publications, etc.), to pay for obligations on the fields (rents, teachers, running expenses, etc.), to provide allowances for missionaries and home staff, and to meet any other needs of the work.

(31) **FIELD FUNDS.** Gifts designated for a particular field are set aside for the General Fund of the respective field. This money is used for rents on that field, for missionary allowances, and for other field needs. The General Fund of the Mission is relieved, to this extent, from contributing to these items.

(32) **SUPPORT GIFTS.** Some churches or church groups, and also a few individual donors, contribute regularly toward the support of certain individual missionaries. Such gifts are gratefully received and are applied directly toward the respective missionary allowances, thus relieving the General Fund of the Mission, from which these sums would otherwise have been drawn. More or less regular gifts to an individual will be considered as support gifts. The Mission does not require that missionaries shall secure the promise of regular support from anyone, in any form, before they go to the field.

**SPECIAL PROJECTS.**

(33) **A.** Some gifts are designated for certain approved projects, such as Coaba Farm, the orphanage, literature, Mission homes, Travel Fund, medical work, etc. All such

gifts are applied to the project thus indicated.

(34) B. Mission workers look to the Lord to supply the means for their outfit, as well as their transportation to and from the field, apart from Mission funds.

(35) C. An individual missionary may personally finance and operate a special project with the consent of the Field Conference concerned. Money used for such an undertaking shall be considered as a donation to the Mission, and the project shall be operated under the supervision of the Field Conference. The Mission's General Fund shall not be taxed for such a purpose, nor shall the Mission be obliged to assume any financial responsibility for the same. If the individual is unable to continue the support of such a project, it shall be curtailed or abandoned, and the individual shall bear any losses involved.

(36) D. Any special project which extends beyond the regular maintenance of the missionary staff of any field, and which is undertaken with the approval and participation of the Field Conference (such as schools, farms, orphanages, radio stations, printing of literature, support of national workers, etc), shall be maintained by the Field Fund of the Conference in whatever manner the Conference determines. If it is found that the Field Fund is insufficient to maintain such projects, they shall be curtailed or abandoned, and the Field Conference shall bear any financial losses involved. In no way shall the General Fund of the Mission be responsible for the financial operation of any such venture. If its resources permit, the General Fund may be used now and then to assist such projects, but it shall never be responsible for their maintenance, or for any other financial obligation incurred in connection with them.

(37) E. Projects at home which are found to be necessary for the benefit of the entire Mission (as offices, homes, publications, deputation work, Candidates' Course, conferences, etc.) are under the charge of the Directorate and are maintained by the General Fund of

the Mission. When they involve major financial commitments or questions of policy, they shall require the approval of the Home Council, after consultation with the Fields. In case any workers of the Mission should wish to assume the maintenance of such projects out of their own funds, they may do so, and thus the resources of the General Fund can be directed more fully toward supporting the work of the Mission abroad.

(38) **PERSONAL GIFTS.** At times personal gifts are received for the missionaries and workers. These gifts, not intended to be applied to their monthly allowance, may be used by the individual missionary in any way he likes. Any such gifts received by the Mission will be sent to the missionary for whom they are intended and will have no bearing on the individual's allowance from other funds. Any money which is meant to be a private gift to an individual, and which is not intended as a donation to the Mission to relieve Mission funds of his or her support, should be clearly marked as "personal."

## **VII. MISSIONARIES AND WORKERS**

(39) As a rule, the Mission does not personally or directly solicit the services of anyone for the work of the Mission. This is because the Mission does not desire to divert to itself men and women who would naturally and properly seek to give themselves through the regular service channels of the organized Church, and also because the Mission believes that God will clearly call persons of His choice to offer themselves for service in this Mission.

### ***A. Candidates***

(40) **INQUIRIES.** Anyone wishing to make application for service in connection with the World Mission Prayer League may address the General Director of the Mission at the Home Office. When writing, the candidate should give a full statement of his motive for wanting to do missionary work in the foreign field, and also any further information about himself as may help to give a clear and full view of the case of the applicant.

(41) APPLICATIONS. If the General Director thinks it advisable, he shall then forward to the applicant a regular application form, together with a medical form to be filled out with the help of a reputable physician approved by the Mission.

(42) CLOSER ACQUAINTANCE. If the ensuing correspondence proves satisfactory, the applicant shall be invited to come to the Mission home to take up residence there for a period of time set by the Directorate, in order that the candidate may become better acquainted with the vision, the principles and practice, and the work of the Mission both at home and abroad. It also enables the leaders of the Mission to become more personally acquainted with the applicant.

(43) DECISIONS CONCERNING APPLICATIONS. Only after such a visit shall the Personnel Committee of the Mission review the case in full, and after a personal interview and prayer, bring its recommendations to the Home Council, which will act upon the application in accordance with the leading of the Lord and the practice of the Mission.

(44) CONSIDER THE IMPLICATIONS. Anyone who desires to make application to the Mission should soberly consider the solemn implications of such a step. Applicants are expected to understand the principles and practice of the Mission and not to offer themselves unless they are heartily in agreement with them and earnestly desire to carry them out. They must carefully count the cost and be willing to risk all, to sacrifice freely, and to die for the sake of the Gospel. They must be prepared to live lives of privation, of toil, of loneliness, of danger; to be looked down upon by their own countrymen; to be despised by the natives; and to live in the interior, far from the comforts, advantages, conveniences, and protection of civilization. They must be ready to see others enjoying plenty while they themselves may be experiencing want. They should be able to stand steady in trial, to meet bitter disappointments with sweetness and grace, to endure inconveniences, interruptions, and



delays without murmuring and complaining, and to bear the failings of others with unbroken patience and unmeasured love. They should be ready to "take joyfully the spoiling of their possessions," and "to rejoice that they are counted worthy to suffer for His Name." They should trust God alike in sickness and in health, in times of shortage as in times of full supply. They must be possessed of a willing and obedient spirit in all things, must be willing to go anywhere, to do anything, or to make any adaptation—and that with joy. If they prove themselves to be faithful servants, they will find in Christ and in His Word a treasure, a joy and strength that will far outweigh all that they suffer for Him.

(45) **QUALIFICATIONS.** Candidates are expected to satisfy the Home Council of the Mission as to the soundness of their faith in all the fundamental truths of the Bible as interpreted and taught by the Lutheran Church. They shall subscribe to the doctrinal basis of the Mission and have a genuine, personal faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord. They shall have the clear conviction that the Lord has called them for specific missionary service. They shall give satisfactory evidence that they are able to live and work with others in peace and love, with unity of spirit; that they can pray in faith; and that, together with their fellow-workers, they can discern the leading of the spirit in their work. They shall be committed to a life of implicit faith and trust in God alone to provide all that is needed. It is the conviction of the Mission that before going abroad candidates should have some practical experience at home in a secular trade or occupation, as well as in soul-winning and other lines of Christian service. They should prove themselves faithful, able, and fruitful workers before attempting to go into foreign fields.

(46) **EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS.** The World Mission Prayer League has not adopted any definite standard with regard to the amount of general education or specialized training to be required of its applicants. It desires and appreciates the best possible preparation



for its missionaries, recognizing that this is always helpful, and for some work on the field even indispensable. Yet its chief emphasis is upon spiritual qualifications and gifts. It accepts ordained pastors, lay evangelists, medical men and women, teachers, craftsmen, and others who give promise of useful service. One purpose of the Mission is to afford an opportunity for the common lay Christian to put aside his secular business or work and take a personal, active part in witnessing, or otherwise spreading the good news of salvation in Christ to the ends of the earth.

### *B. The Missionary*

(47) A candidate becomes a bona fide missionary as soon as he has been accepted by the Home Council of the World Mission Prayer League. In most cases he will be expected to return home to his occupation, to remain there until the Lord, in answer to prayer, supplies the needed funds for his equipment and passage to the field, and in other respects opens the way to go. In the meantime the missionary will be expected to witness for Christ wherever he is, and to wait patiently and quietly for God to supply the needed funds, which will surely come if there has been a true call from the Lord and if there is a true faith and dependence upon Him. A service will be arranged by the Home Directorate before the missionary departs for the field, at which time he will be duly commissioned by the Mission for missionary service.

(48) During the first two years on the field the missionary will be expected to make his orientation and adjustment to the life and work of the field. His right to vote shall be determined by the respective Field Conference. This first stage of missionary life is intended to aid the missionary in making his adjustment to the work on the field, and to enable him to assume as soon as possible the full duties of the work. He should understand his work, fit himself for it, and find his place in it. In order to do this, the new missionary shall give all diligence to the following:

1. To see the vision and commission of the work, understand the strategy that the Lord has indicated to the Conference for accomplishing this commission, and seek to enter actually and heartily with all the other workers into bearing the burden of it.

2. To acquire a good working knowledge of the language and constantly use it. He shall pursue a definite course of study, shall be examined from time to time in the language, and shall satisfy the Field Directorate that he has a sufficient mastery of the language as to be really useful in the work.

3. To learn to take care of himself in every way, manage his own housekeeping, travel readily, handle his own private affairs, get along well with the nationals, and conduct himself with good behavior toward all.

4. To "... walk worthily of the calling wherewith you are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."—Eph. 4:1-3.

(49) When the new missionary has satisfactorily prepared himself by the above standards, he shall then be expected to bear the full responsibilities of a senior worker of the Mission, wherever he might be placed or appointed for service by the Field Conference.

### *C. Spheres of Labor*

(50) Each Field Conference, at its annual meeting, shall assign to its missionaries their positions of work and responsibility on the field. In placing its missionaries, the Conference shall seek the will of the Lord and consider the fitness and the call of the respective missionary. All missionaries shall be willing to give temporary help to their brethren when asked to do so in times of emergency. They should proceed to their posts without unnecessary delay, and when they have accepted a permanent appointment they should remain there, unless some unforeseen circumstance or great emergency compels them to

leave. If for any reason a change should be desired, they shall so inform the Field Director and await a satisfactory adjustment. Patience and perseverance are needed to overcome difficulties and hardships, so that the work may be carried on.

#### ***D. Ministerial Acts of the Missionary***

(51) The ordained pastor in the fields of the World Mission Prayer League shall administer the sacraments and perform the ministerial acts common to his office.

(52) Upon the request of any of the Field Conferences, the World Mission Prayer League may ordain a lay missionary for the pastoral ministry in the work of the Mission. He shall then administer the sacraments and perform the ministerial acts common to the office of the ministry.

(53) Any other missionary shall teach the Word of God, and offer spiritual counsel and comfort wherever possible. When no pastor is available, or in cases of emergency, any missionary present shall administer the sacraments according to need.

(54) It is the conviction of the World Mission Prayer League that God desires to use lay Christians in direct spiritual work on the foreign mission fields. The Mission holds it to be a principal part of its commission to encourage this type of ministry in the church and to serve as an agency for sending out lay missionaries.

#### ***E. Furloughs***

(55) There is no fixed term of service on the field, but each Field Conference shall arrange furloughs for its workers as circumstances and funds permit and the individual may require. Furloughs are desirable because of their benefits to the missionaries themselves, and then because the testimony and ministry of the workers enrich the Church at home, bring the fields close to the hearts of the people, quicken prayer, and challenge fresh obedience and faith, besides calling out new recruits for the harvest fields.

(56) The length of furloughs (usually one year) shall be determined by the Home Directorate, in consultation with the Field Directorate. Missionaries home on furlough shall arrange their activities in consultation with and under the supervision of the Home Directorate.

(57) Whenever it is found necessary for anyone to return home, whether it be on furlough, or because of sickness, resignation, or for some other cause, the Field Director shall communicate with the Home Director, and the person in question shall not leave the field until travel funds are on hand. Before a missionary who is on furlough may return to the field, his departure must be approved by the Home Council, after consultation with the Field Directorate.

### *F. Resignations and Dismissals*

(58) If a missionary desires at any time to sever his connections with the Mission, he shall, if on the field, give three months' notice in writing to the Field Director, who, after a personal conference with the missionary, shall take whatever steps may be necessary in the case. If the missionary is at home, he must give at least one month's notice to the General Director, who shall likewise take such action in the case as may be necessary. Anyone leaving the Mission must transfer all Mission moneys or properties in his charge into the hands of the person appointed to receive them for the Mission.

(59) If a missionary should prove unable to cope with the difficulties of the language, to bear the climate, to work in harmony with the brethren, to adapt himself to the nationals, and to remain stable in the face of difficulties and testings; or should he in some other way show himself unsuited to the work, the Field Directorate shall either grant the worker an extended opportunity to try to make the necessary adjustments, or refer him to the Home Council for retirement from the field or any other action. In case any matter of sufficient gravity should ever arise, the Field Directorate has the power of suspending any worker from his connection with the Mis-

sion, in which case the Directorate would, of course, act with all possible consideration for all concerned. Final action in continuing or terminating the connection of any worker in the Mission will be taken by the Home Council.

### ***G. Retired Workers***

(60) The Home Council shall determine the retirement of missionaries and full-time staff members who have a long service record in the Mission. Such retired workers shall continue as members of the Mission family, shall share in all allowances and provisions according to the guiding principles of the Mission, and shall arrange their activities in consultation with and under the supervision of the Home Directorate.

(61) The calling, the manner of life, and the principles and methods of work as held by the Mission and its workers are accepted for life by all concerned, and are applicable at any stage of the worker's life in the Mission.

### ***H. Missionaries' Children***

(62) Allowances shall be appropriated for missionaries' children in keeping with the principles that regulate the allowances of missionaries. Such allowances shall continue as long as the parents are in the Mission and until the children reach the age of maturity. Parents shall be personally responsible for the education of their children. Any Field Conference may set up a school for missionaries' children as a field project, or may cooperate with other missions in such a project, if the Field Conference so decides. In such a case the financial responsibility shall rest with the Field Conference and not with the General Fund of the Mission.

## **VIII. MISSION PROPERTY**

(63) The Mission cannot be responsible for any expenditure that it has not authorized, nor can it be required to reimburse a missionary for any personal funds invested in Mission property.

(64) In case a Field Conference shall decide to erect buildings, or in some other way to secure premises, the



money required for such purposes shall ordinarily be supplied from the Field funds, or from Mission funds designated for such purposes. The Home Council shall share in decisions concerning major commitments.

(65) Missionaries may, if they so desire and the Field Directorate approves, use their own private money to purchase or improve property or to erect or repair buildings to be used for mission work. It shall be understood, however, that all such property is to be held as the property of the Mission, and funds used for this purpose are to be regarded as donations to the Mission. Under no circumstances shall the missionaries who make such gifts feel that because of their donations the Mission is obliged to grant them special liberties, considerations, or favors in their appointed place of work.

(66) Whenever new buildings are to be erected or extensive alterations made on existing Mission property, whether with private or Mission funds, the plans for the proposed operations must be approved by the Directorate before such work is begun. All minor improvements and repairs, whether cared for out of private or Field funds, shall also be approved by the Directorate.

(67) All Mission equipment supplied to the missionaries to assist them in their work shall at all times be treated as Mission property, and shall not be loaned out or disposed of to anyone outside the Mission personnel without the permission of the Field Director. The missionary in charge of each station is responsible for all Mission property or equipment and shall make an annual report of such to the Field Director.

## **IX. THE NATIONAL CHURCH**

(68) It shall be the aim of the Mission, as soon as the spiritual condition of the Christians on the field shall warrant it, to organize them into congregations, and to that end to establish the necessary offices, institute the administration of the means of grace, introduce church discipline, and stimulate and encourage the national Christians to undertake the evangelization of their own

people. As far as possible the national Church shall be allowed to develop indigenously from the beginning—in self-government, in financial self-support, and in self-propagation. Since the World Mission Prayer League is not a church body or a synod, no provision is made for any kind of organizational union between itself and the indigenous churches that spring up on its various mission fields, and these are therefore entirely independent. They shall be taught and encouraged, however, to accept and follow the Lutheran faith and confession. Each one shall be encouraged to develop its own national character. The matter of using Mission funds to employ nationals shall be left to the decision of each Field Conference, with careful consideration of national labor laws.

## **X. RELATIONS WITH OTHER MISSIONS**

(69) The World Mission Prayer League desires and seeks cordial fellowship and cooperation with other evangelical churches and missions in the common task of evangelization. The General Director at home and the Field Director on each field shall represent this Mission in all its relations with other missions.

## **XI. RELATIONS WITH GOVERNMENTS**

(70) Every missionary of the World Mission Prayer League shall be subject to the laws and regulations of the government in question and shall urge this same duty upon national Christians. He shall refrain, as far as possible, from meddling in tribal disputes and court proceedings among the people he is called to serve. In all dealings with governments the Field Director is the one authorized to speak and to act in behalf of the World Mission Prayer League.

## **MISSIONARY MAXIMS**

The Mission has recognized and embraced four principles which lie at the foundation of its missionary calling, of its methods as herein described, and of this way of life.

**FIRST:** Each missionary must be possessed of an abso-

lute devotion to Jesus Christ. Because he has been called and sent by Christ, he must regard himself in a very real sense "a bonds slave of Christ," "an ambassador of Christ."

Such a relationship means that the worker and the Mission, while thankfully recognizing the visible channels, will look to Christ alone as the only sure Source for the supply of whatever is needed to fulfill their calling and ministry. This will make it possible to carry forward an unlimited advance in the work. And because Christ's riches are without measure and His promises are free to all, new advances will be continually undertaken, new recruits will be sent forth as rapidly as they volunteer and qualify, and new fields will be opened in the full expectation of His added provision.

This fundamental relationship to Christ will sustain the missionary and hold him to his work when other ties fail, and will enable him in triumphant faith to face hardship with joy, to endure privation with contentment, and to suffer loneliness and adversity with courage. Funds might run short and fail, or the Mission might even cease to exist, but if the missionary is devoted to Christ and has put his trust in Him above all, the Lord will never fail or disappoint him.

SECOND: Added to his deep personal devotion to Christ, the missionary must possess an affectionate loyalty to the other members of the Mission and of the whole Body of Christ. This will lead him to love his fellow-workers, to bear their burdens and weaknesses as if they were his own, and to exert a strong influence for faith and unity in the missionary force. It will safeguard him from the temptation to grow impatient, and possibly even to separate himself from his fellow-workers in order to become an independent free-lance and do as he pleases. Such a spirit of loyalty to the whole Body of Christ will also enable the missionary to love and trust the native Christians as brethren, to be patient and charitable toward them, and to assist them in every possible way to become fully established as a strong, indigenous church. And finally, this same spirit will lead him to regard his

work not as a kind of competition with rival missions in the same area, but rather as a loving cooperation with others who are his brethren and fellow-soldiers of the Cross.

**THIRD:** An underlying principle of life and fruitfulness in the Spirit is the way of the Cross. As the Savior poured out His soul unto death as an offering for sin, so His disciples, indwelt by His Spirit, will likewise be poured out in self-giving, sacrifice, and loving service that others might know and believe in Him as their Redeemer and Lord.

Having themselves found the joy of salvation and the delights of Christ's love, they are moved by a deep, new urge to transmit these treasures to others. They are not only getters but givers. A strong sense of responsibility grips them. The riches they have found are not only for them but are meant for all the world. They owe it to their fellowmen to tell them of this. A passion to evangelize the world burns in their hearts.

But it is not easy to carry this out. "The whole world is in the power of the evil one." (1 John 5:19) It will cost a price in precious years of one's lifetime, in concentration of all one's faculties, in sacrifice, in prayer, and in stern labor to leave home and seek the salvation of men in all parts of the world. It will mean that men must turn away from seeking after costly comforts, larger incomes, material possessions, and places of personal advantage, honor and privilege, and deliberately choose instead to embrace the way of poverty, of loss, of privation, of humiliation, and whatever else it costs to bring the Word of God to as many people as possible.

Instead of feeling that these are just hardships which must be endured because they are unavoidable, we see that this is the price of victory and conquest and the way to the harvest. As the kernel of wheat wins a harvest by falling into the earth and dying, so the reward of the intercessor and the laborer is as great as his travail and his "deaths." Thus the separation from loved ones, the loneliness and heartache, the setbacks and discouragements, the long hours of labor, and the faithful pleadings



with God and man are that price, that cost, that necessary dying-process of the seed which in the fulness of time will spring forth in an abundant and fruitful harvest. The Mission holds that only in this spirit which takes pleasure in necessities and distresses, constantly triumphing in Christ who came, *not* to please Himself, *not* to be ministered unto but rather to minister, and to give His life for others, can we expect to advance in the work, obtain victories among non-Christian people, and have revival in the Church.

FOURTH: The Mission in all its work seeks primarily the conviction of sinners and their conversion to God. It believes that we are commissioned to preach the Word of God so as to "open men's eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me." (Acts 26:18) The Mission holds that repentance and faith in Christ will effect as great a change in the lives of any persons in foreign lands as in our own, and that all the efforts of the Mission as far as possible should be geared to this objective.

With evangelization, thus interpreted, as the primary aim of the Mission, all educational, industrial, social, and medical works are regarded as invaluable auxiliaries to break down prejudices, to open closed doors, and to minister to those in poverty and need. Such auxiliary efforts are pursued modestly, with all simplicity, as an aid to the primary commission of evangelism.



# CONSTITUTION

## OF THE WORLD MISSION PRAYER LEAGUE, INCORPORATED

### ARTICLE I . . . *Name and Headquarters*

The name of the Mission shall be THE WORLD MISSION PRAYER LEAGUE, INC., with headquarters in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

### ARTICLE II . . . *Confession of Faith*

The World Mission Prayer League accepts and acknowledges the canonical books of the Old Testament and the New Testament as the inspired and inerrant Word of God and as the only sufficient and infallible rule of faith and practice. It also accepts the Apostolic, the Nicene, and the Athanasian Creeds, the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, Luther's Small Catechism, and the other symbolical books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as brief but true expositions of the Word of God.

### ARTICLE III . . . *Purpose*

The purpose of the World Mission Prayer League shall be:

1. To pray forth laborers into the Lord's harvest fields, according to His command in Matthew 9:36-39, and in Luke 10:2.
2. To provide an agency for the sending forth of missionaries who, through evangelism, education, and philanthropy, will proclaim the Gospel in the field to which they are called.
3. To promote such activity in the homeland as will serve best to realize the above stated objectives.

### ARTICLE IV . . . *Membership*

The membership of the World Mission Prayer League shall consist of such persons who have shown definite prayer interest in the work of the Mission by signing the

Prayer League membership card.

However, of those who have signed the Prayer League membership card, only those are eligible to vote who are members of good standing in a Lutheran congregation and who are in full sympathy with the "Principles and Practice" of the Mission. All voters must likewise be approved by the Credentials Committee appointed by the chairman at each annual meeting of the League.

## ARTICLE V . . . *Administration*

A. The administration and direction of the affairs of the World Mission Prayer League shall be vested in a Board of Trustees, consisting of not less than three and not more than nineteen members, approximately one-half pastors and one-half lay members. The trustees shall be elected by the League at its Annual Meeting for terms of three years each, in such manner that approximately one-third of their number be retired and a like number elected each year.

1. The Board of Trustees shall meet within fourteen days after the annual meeting of the League for the purpose of organizing. At this meeting the board shall elect from its members a president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer. The duties of the officers shall be such as usually appertain to these offices.
2. For the transaction of business, a majority shall constitute a quorum.
3. The duties of the Board of Trustees shall be:
  - a. To exercise general supervision over the spiritual and temporal affairs of the Mission.
  - b. To receive, record, and disburse the funds of the Mission. It shall have the authority and powers and be subject to the obligations that pertain to such boards under and by virtue of the laws of the State of Minnesota.
  - c. To arrange dates and places for the regular and special meetings of the League.
4. Vacancies in the Board of Trustees shall be filled

by appointment made by the remaining members for the unexpired term of the retiring member.

5. The Treasurer shall keep proper records of all funds received by the Mission and shall make all disbursements as directed by the League or the Board of Trustees. He shall render a financial statement to the Board of Trustees at its regular meetings, and a yearly report, properly audited, to the League at its annual meetings. The responsibility for the proper discharge of the duties of his office shall rest with him, whether performed by him personally or delegated to others.

B. A General Director shall be appointed by the Board of Trustees for a term of three years. This appointment shall be made after consultation with all of the field conferences of the Mission.

C. The Directorate shall consist of the General Director and three members of the Board of Trustees who can meet frequently, elected annually by the Board of Trustees, one of whom shall be the treasurer of the board. It shall be the responsibility of the Directorate to administer and supervise all the affairs of the League in behalf of the Board of Trustees and in accord with its decisions and the constitution of the League.

D. The maximum sum of money to be expended from the general fund by the Board of Trustees in any single transaction, without express authorization by the League, shall be three thousand dollars (\$3,000.00).

## ARTICLE VI . . . *Meetings*

The Annual Meeting of the League shall be held at such a time as may be decided by the Board of Trustees. Twenty-five (25) members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of the affairs of the League at its annual or special meetings. The Board of Trustees shall meet quarterly and/or at such times as may be found necessary at the call of the president. The Directorate shall meet as frequently as the needs of the work require, or at the call of the General Director.

## ARTICLE VII . . . *The Foreign Field*

The missionaries on the field shall constitute the Field Conference. Each field conference shall be self-governing and have autonomy in all matters related to the work on the field, and such autonomy shall be extended to the national church as soon as feasible. The conference meets once a year, when all missionaries are required to be present unless excused by the Field Director. The conference shall elect a director, vice-director, secretary, and treasurer. These officers shall constitute the Executive Committee of the conference, together with any other additional members which the conference shall see fit to elect to the Executive Committee.

## ARTICLE VIII . . . *Amendment*

This constitution may be amended or modified at any regular or special meeting of the League. Written proposal of any such amendments or modifications must, however, be submitted to the Board of Trustees at least three weeks previous to such meetings. Any amendments or modifications in the said constitution shall not take effect, however, until ratified by the League in annual meeting one year after they have been proposed and adopted.

# **BY-LAWS**

## **OF THE WORLD MISSION PRAYER LEAGUE, INCORPORATED**

### **I. FINANCES**

1. The Mission does not authorize any direct solicitation of funds.
2. The Mission does not pledge or guarantee any salary or fixed amount of support or maintenance to any person dependent upon its ministrations, but only promises to faithfully disburse whatever amounts are received.
3. The treasurer at home shall each month transmit to each field its full share of the funds which have been received by the Mission. Each field conference shall assign and disburse, in accord with the "Principles and Practice" of the Mission, all funds which have been received for the work on the field, such as allowances, rents, and all other expenditures.
4. Neither the Mission nor any of its individual missionaries shall ever go into debt.

### **II. MEETINGS**

1. All members of the League shall be notified of the Annual Meeting thirty (30) days before it convenes. This shall also apply to any special meeting of the League.
2. Notice shall be given to the members of the Board of Trustees at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting of the board, both for its regular quarterly meetings and also for its special meetings.

### **III. PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE**

A written statement of principles and practice of the World Mission Prayer League consistent with the constitution and by-laws of the League shall be adopted by the Board of Trustees, following approval by all field conferences of the Mission, for the purpose of further



clarifying the objectives of the organization. This statement of principles and practice shall serve as a supplement to the by-laws.

#### **IV. ADDITIONS AND AMENDMENTS**

Additions and amendments to these by-laws may be made at any meeting of the Board of Trustees, but any such proposed additions or amendments must be incorporated in the notice of annual or special meeting of the League and ratified by the League at such meeting.



